

CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Notes

January 17, 2006

Attendance: Bryce Christensen, Larry Peterman, Charlie Sperry, Brad Schmitz, Mike Moore, Dwayne Andrews, Ginger Omland, John Ensign, John Little, Mike Moore, Todd Anderson, Larry Woolston, Warren Broeder, Mary Zeiss Stange, Julie Jordan, Mark Forman, Arthur Hayes III, Chris Pileski, Todd Steadman, John Wilkinson, Greg Mohr, Rob Reukauf, and Jim Schaefer.

Bryce Christensen, Regional Supervisor, began the meeting by welcoming everyone and reviewing the agenda. He then introduced Larry Peterman, Chief of Field Operations in Helena.

Larry Peterman, Director of Field Operations

Larry gave an introduction of the Citizen Advisory Council, how members are chosen, and why there is a need for a Citizen Advisory Council in Region 7. He explained there are basically two things FWP is looking for from the CAC members: 1) Feedback on issues that FWP is facing and 2) to be able to utilize the CAC as a sounding board for new ideas and initiatives. He also touched on what other regions are doing with Citizen Advisory Councils across the state.

Charlie Sperry, River Rec Mgmt Specialist:

Charlie gave a presentation on the commercial use of FWP managed land and waters. He stated that commercial use is already occurring on some FWP sites and that FWP does not have guidelines for administering commercial use when it occurs. FWP is holding a series of scoping meetings to identify the issues pertaining to commercial use of department lands. Mr. Sperry offered to help the Citizen Advisory Council members to get involved in this process.

Rob Reukauf asked if commercial use rules would apply to WMA's and all the major rivers in the state. John Wilkinson commented that if all agencies could streamline their rules, it would be less complicated and there would be better compliance. Todd Steadman asked how things were working with the Big Hole River. Mary Zeiss Stange asked if any commercial use group had ever interfered with any hunting activities on FWP land.

FWP R-7 Managers:

Brad Schmitz, Fisheries, John Ensign, Wildlife, John Little, Parks, Mike Moore, Warden Captain, and Dwayne Andrews, Information and Education, all

managers at the Region 7 Fish, Wildlife, & Parks in Miles City gave a brief overview of what their division consists of and some of the projects they are dealing with.

John Wilkinson asked if there was any monitoring on the Tongue as far as CBM to which Brad responded that they have baseline data.

Mr. Wilkinson also inquired of the Wildlife Manager if there was a plan in place if Chronic Wasting Disease were found in Montana. There is a draft CWD management plan in the works. Mr. Ensign said the first step is to locate where CWD was found, how extensive it was, and implement efforts to isolate it. Currently CWD has been found in deer within 50 miles of the Montana border in Wyoming.

John Ensign also mentioned the Landowner Incentive Program and that a new joint position with FWP and Pheasants Forever to improve habitat, which will be located in Sidney, will be hired in the near future.

John Wilkinson asked if there is much public land that could become available to the public if access could be negotiated with a landowner. He felt a temporary lease agreement would be more acceptable to landowners in the beginning. Dwayne responded that there are large blocks of public land that they could get access to but would prefer to see a permanent easement. Present day funding sources for access projects require a permanent easement (perpetuity). John W. felt this might be a problem that PLPW should address. Effort would be to approach the legislature and try to find funding sources for more flexible and temporary access agreements.

CAC Group Discussion Topics: Issues Identified

1. To keep hunting, recreation and fishing from becoming a rich man's sport. The common person must continue to be able to hunt and fish in Montana.
2. Increased funding for the block management program. Use the funding in support of the current program so we do not lose what we have now.
3. More money available for a variety of incentives. Try to figure out incentives other than monetary. FWP give landowners more of a say on how hunting license's can be used for their land. Give the landowner more control but do this in cooperation with FWP.
4. Access corridors, lease options, purchasing options. Find ways to gain public access across private land without necessarily having to obtain a permanent easement.
5. Diversion dam at Intake & proposed fish ladder; will this impact fishing opportunities, especially in the spring during paddlefish season. Management of Seven Sisters and Elk Island is not being accomplished according to the present agreement between the FWP

and lessee (farmer). Boat access at the river bridge in Sidney shut down after dark so people that fished there at night no longer have that opportunity. Outfitters get in trouble for game or other violations and nothing is done to them.

6. Each Deer A tag holder should have to take 5 does.
7. Shortage of Mule Deer does in the Cherry Creek area so doe harvest is a problem. We do not have a good mule deer doe population.
8. Region wide tags (does – deer/antelope): Doe harvest seems to be concentrated on the public land and especially the National Forest in our area.
9. Hunting clubs are the primary access threat to the public. Outfitters are constrained by statute and a cap on numbers but leasing ranches by private hunting clubs are not under any type of restriction or control.
10. More antelope tags need to be available for the non-resident hunter.
11. More Antelope tags need to be made available (increase the 13,000 cap to 15,000) and could we consider a split antelope season. Tags would be applicable to the first two weeks of the season and the remaining tags would be available the last two weeks of the season. This might help spread the hunting pressure out over the season instead of having such large hunter numbers during the first weekend.
12. Raise daily goose limit to five. Can FWP work with the USFWS to increase the daily dark goose limit?
13. Make more convenient hunting opportunities regarding women and youth.
14. Hard to find good Mule Deer buck these days.
15. Non-resident landowner to tell their story. Can we get some nonresident landowners to come to the CAC and tell us their side of the story regarding their feelings about hunting opportunities in Montana.
16. Access to all public land. If a ranch has public land it should be accessible to the public for recreational purposes. (Public Comment).

Next Meeting: March 15th at 6:00 p.m. in Miles City at the Regional Headquarters. Next meeting will include dinner, a presentation about the North American Model for Wildlife Management: A presentation on the Region 7 Wildlife Management philosophy: Open discussion period. Public Comment.

January 18, 2006: Region 7 Staff Meeting

The CAC issue list was reviewed and each issue was placed under a broad topic. The topics identified are: 1. Access

2. Regulations/Enforcement
3. Montana Hunting Heritage
4. Habitat

The following displays the single issues identified by CAC members and what topic they fall under (some issues fall under more than one topic):

ACCESS

Hunting, recreation and fishing keep from becoming a rich man's sport. The common person must continue to be able to hunt and fish in Montana.

Increased funding for the block management program. Use the funding in support of the current program so we do not lose what we have now.

More money available for a variety of incentives. Try to figure out incentives other than monetary. FWP give landowners more of a say on how hunting license's can be used for their land. Give the landowner more control but do this in cooperation with FWP.

Access corridors, lease options, purchasing options. Find ways to gain public access across private land without necessarily having to obtain a permanent easement.

Boat access at the river bridge in Sidney shut down after dark so people that fished there at night no longer have that opportunity.

Shortage of mule deer does in the Cherry Creek area so doe harvest is a problem. We do not have a good mule deer doe population.

Region wide tags (does - deer/antelope): Doe harvest seems to be concentrated on the public land and especially the National Forest in our area.

Hunting clubs are the primary access threat to the public. Outfitters are constrained by statute and a cap on numbers but leasing ranches by private hunting clubs are not under any type of restriction or control.

Non-resident landowner to tell their story. Can we get some nonresident landowners to come to the CAC and tell us their side of the story regarding their feelings about hunting opportunities in Montana.

Access to all public land. If a ranch has public land it should be accessible to the public for recreational purposes. (Public Comment).

MONTANA'S HUNTING HERITAGE

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Hunting opportunities regarding women, youth (making more convenient).

Hard to find good mule deer buck these days.

Non-resident landowner to tell their story. Can we get some nonresident landowners to come to the CAC and tell us their side of the story regarding their feelings about hunting opportunities in Montana.

ENFORCEMENT/REGULATIONS

Outfitters get in trouble for game or other violations and nothing is done to them.

Management of Seven Sisters and Elk Island is not being accomplished according to the present agreement between the FWP and lessee (farmer).

Each Deer A tag holder should have to take 5 does.

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Raise daily goose limit to five. Can FWP work with the USFWS to increase the daily dark goose limit?

HABITAT

Diversion dam at intake & proposed fish ladder, will this impact fishing opportunities especially in the spring during paddlefish season.

Management of Seven Sisters and Elk Island is not being managed according to the present agreement between the FWP and lessee (farmer).